

The Prairie Light Review

Volume 7

Number 2 *Art You Can Dance To*

Article 22

Spring 5-1-1988

Doing Dishes

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College of DuPage

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Recommended Citation

Zabransky, Richard (1988) "Doing Dishes," *The Prairie Light Review*: Vol. 7 : No. 2 , Article 22.
Available at: <https://dc.cod.edu/plr/vol7/iss2/22>

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DOING DISHES

Richard Zabransky

It is a bad
habit, liking washing
your hands too much,
like flushing

the toilet
when you don't
have to. I go out
after supper, to knock

on people's doors, to ask
them if they need
their dishes done. I jog
into their kitchens, roll

up my sleeves, swig down
half a Coke somebody
didn't finish, get the water
good and hot, and start

to work. I walk into their
living rooms, the hair
on my arms plastered
to the skin

like baby's scalp.
"Look," I say, "every
plate, cup, glass —
like never been used."

Their favorite television
commercial begins;
they sing the jingle
They long to buy.